

Utah Fish Consumption Advisories

Introduction

National Fish Advisory

Reports

Fact Sheets

Links

Contacts

Utah Fish Advisories

Map of Utah Fish Advisories

Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I eat fish?

What is an advisory?

Why do we have advisories?

Why are some fish not safe?

Mercury

Selenium

Arsenic

How can I reduce the health risks from contaminated fish?

How much is one meal of fish?

What about fish that I buy instead of catch?

Where can I get more information?

Where are fish advisories in Utah?

Who is my local Health Department?



Introduction

Fish are healthful foods that provide a diet high in protein and low in saturated fat. Studies have shown that [omega-3 fatty acids](#) in fish may reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke. Fish also provide a good source of vitamins and minerals.

Fishing is a fun and relaxing outdoor activity that you can enjoy with your family and friends. Whether you are fishing to enjoy the outdoors, to spend time with family, or to catch dinner, you should always be safe. The Utah Department of Health is working to make sure you are safe when you fish.

Some fish caught in Utah may not be safe to eat because they contain harmful levels of some chemicals. This does not mean that you have to stop eating fish. The [fish advisories](#) tell you where you should limit the amount of fish you eat. Fish can accumulate environmental contaminants from the water in which they live or from the food they eat. These environmental contaminants may accumulate to levels that can be harmful to people who eat fish.

National Fish Advisory

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are advising women who are pregnant or may become pregnant, nursing mothers, and young children to avoid eating fish that contain high levels of mercury, such as:

- shark
- swordfish
- king mackerel
- tilefish

Up to 12 ounces (2 average meals) a week of a variety of fish and shellfish can be eaten. The most commonly eaten fish that are low in mercury are:

- shrimp
- canned light tuna
- salmon
- pollock
- catfish.



Another commonly eaten fish, albacore ("white") tuna has more mercury than canned light tuna. Up to 6 ounces (one average meal) of albacore tuna can be eaten per week.

If you want more information about the mercury levels in the various types of fish you eat, or to compare commercial levels with those levels now found in Utah fish, see the FDA food safety site [mercury levels in commercial fish and shellfish](#).

Reports

[Silver Creek Health Consultation](#)

[Gunlock Reservoir](#)

[Mill Creek](#)

[Yuba](#)

[Cutler](#)

[Strawberry](#)

[Utah Lake](#)

[Rivers and Lakes of Utah for Years 1990-2005](#)

Fact Sheets

[Find out what you need to know about Mercury in Fish](#)

[Silver Creek Fish Advisory](#)

[Gunlock Reservoir Fish Advisory](#)

[Warning: Fish Advisory for Brown Trout in Mill Creek](#)

Links

- [Environmental Protection Agency fish advisories](#)
- [U.S. Food and Drug Administration fish advisories](#)
- [Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry](#)
- [American Heart Association](#)
- [Utah Department of Environmental Quality](#)
- [Utah Department of Natural Resources](#)

Contacts

Jason Scholl, Toxicologist

dscholl@utah.gov

Utah Department of Health

Environmental Epidemiology Program

PO Box 142104

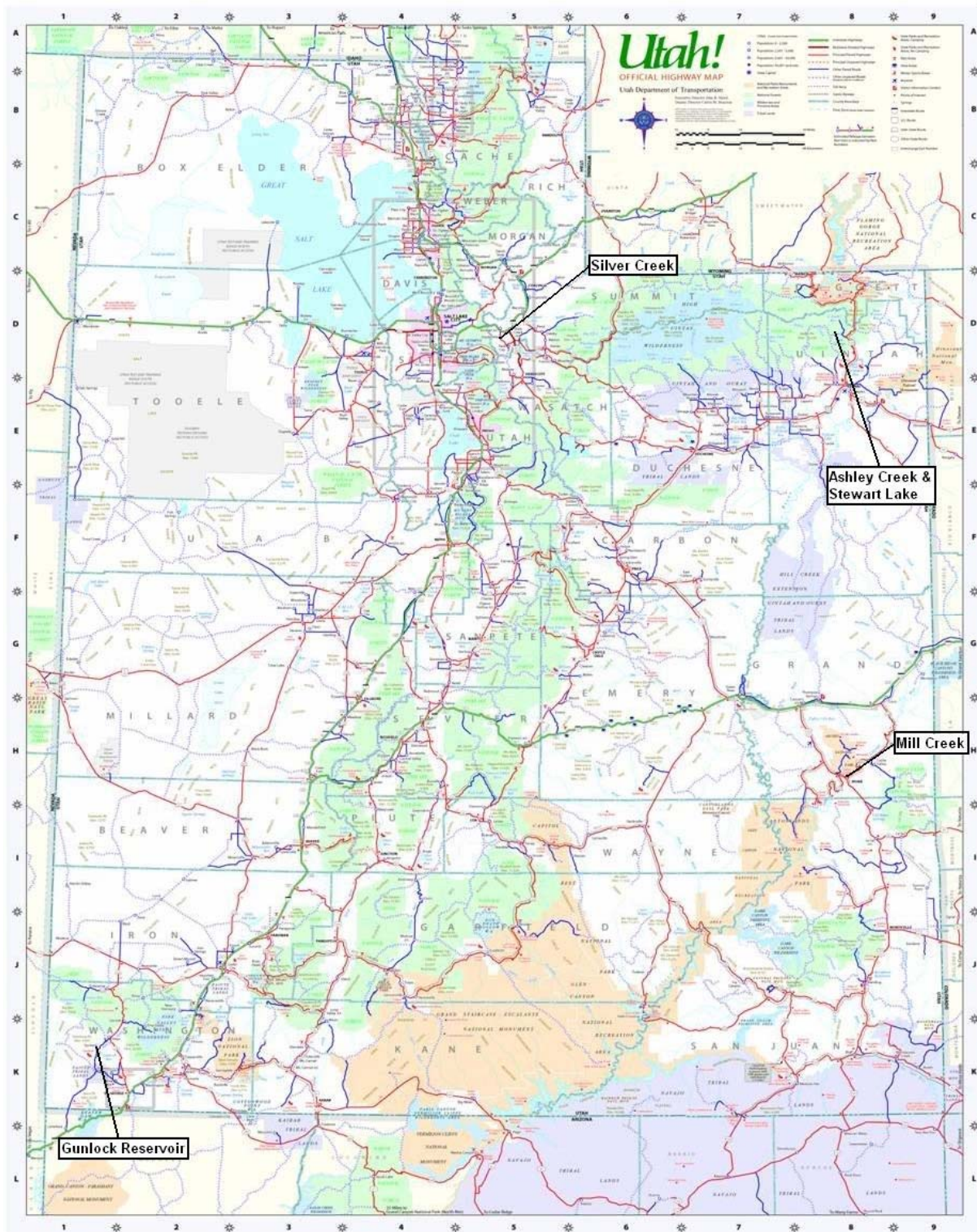
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-2104

Utah Fish Advisories



Body of Water	County	Contaminant	Species	Safe Eating Guidelines			Education	Preparation for cooking
				Pregnant and nursing women	Children < 18 years	General Population		
Silver Creek	Summit	Arsenic	Trout	no more than one 4 ounce serving per month		no more than two 8 ounce serving per month	Silver Creek Fish Advisory	No special cooking process reduces the health hazards from arsenic
lower Ashley Creek drainage and Stewart Lake	Uintah	Selenium	Fish, ducks	avoid consumption		no more than one 6 ounce serving per week		
Gunlock Reservoir	Washington	Mercury	Largemouth Bass	no more than one 4 ounce serving per month		no more than two 8 ounce servings per month	Gunlock Reservoir Fish Advisory	No special cooking process reduces the health hazards from mercury
Mill Creek	Grand	Mercury	Brown Trout	no more than one 4 ounce serving per month		no more than three 8 ounce servings per month	Warning: Fish Advisory for Brown Trout in Mill Creek	No special cooking process reduces the health hazards from mercury

Map of Utah Fish Advisories



Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I eat fish?

What is an advisory?

Why do we have advisories?

Why are some fish not safe?

Mercury

Selenium

Arsenic

How can I reduce the health risks from contaminated fish?

How much is one meal of fish?

What about fish that I buy instead of catch?

Where can I get more information?

Where are fish advisories in Utah?

Who is my local Health Department?

Why should I eat fish?

Eat smart! Fish is an excellent low-fat food and a great source of protein, vitamins and minerals. Fish contain omega-3 fatty acids and oils that are hard to get from other types of food. Eating fish can help children develop properly and even boost the health of adults. In fact, eating fish regularly can reduce your chances of having a stroke or a heart attack. To get all the benefits from fish, experts say that you eat at least two meals of fish each week.

What is an advisory?

Fish consumption advisories help you fish smart! Advisories give you information to help you decide where to fish, which fish to keep, and how much fish to eat. An advisory will list a lake, stream, or river and will list the types of fish that are unsafe in that area.

Many lakes, streams, and rivers in Utah do not have advisories. Not all types of fish are unsafe where there is an advisory. Only limit the fish that are listed on the advisory.

Remember that fishing smart also means fishing legally. You will need a valid Utah fishing license in order to fish in all public lakes, rivers, and streams. Visit [Utah Department of Natural Resources](#) to find out where to buy a license or to order one online.-

Why do we have advisories?

To make sure that the fish you catch are safe to eat, Utah Department of Environmental Quality tests fish from lakes, rivers, and streams all over Utah. All samples are tested for chemicals and metals to see if any of the fish are contaminated.

The Utah Department of Health looks closely at the data and then issues fish consumption advisories where contaminated fish have been found. The health effects from consuming fish are

only in the fish. This means you can still enjoy water activities like boating, skiing, swimming, and even recreational fishing.

Why are some fish not safe?

Harmful materials can get into our environment in many ways. These materials end up in lakes, rivers, and streams where they can contaminate plants and animals, like fish, that live in the water. Contaminants get into fish through the plants and animals that they eat. Some of these chemicals remain in the body of the fish. Older and larger fish have eaten more and been in the water longer, so there may be more contaminants in their bodies. When you eat these fish, the contaminants get into your body, too.

Your body naturally removes small amounts of these contaminants. Health problems may happen when there are too many harmful chemicals in the body. Babies and children are more at risk because their bodies are still developing. Women who are pregnant, may become pregnant, or are nursing should be very careful about the fish that they eat. These women should check the [fish advisory](#) for fish consumption limits. Heavy metals are the main contaminants in Utah. Additional information on contaminants can be found at [Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry](#).

Mercury

Mercury is an element that is found naturally in the environment. Burning coal and other fossil fuels adds the most mercury to the environment. But things like factories and even the burning of trash can increase the mercury in the environment, too. Mercury in the air is brought back to the earth by rain, snow, and sleet and ends up in our lakes and rivers.

Mercury in a mother's body can harm her unborn baby. Brain damage, blindness, seizures and other problems can occur in the baby. Children who take in mercury after they are born can be harmed, too. They can have digestive problems, kidney damage and problems with their nervous systems. Health problems due to mercury in children and unborn babies cannot always be fixed. Pregnant women, women planning to become pregnant, infants, and children under 14 should not eat any fish containing mercury.

In adults, mercury can make your mouth, hands, or feet tingle or feel numb. It can also cause vision or hearing problems. If you have any of these symptoms, please see your doctor. All of these problems in adults can usually be corrected if a person stops eating fish that contain high levels of mercury. Additional information on mercury can be found at [Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry](#) or [Utah Department of Environmental Quality](#).

Selenium

Selenium is a naturally occurring mineral element that is distributed widely in nature in most rocks and soils. In its pure form selenium is metallic gray to black hexagonal crystals. Most processed selenium is used in the electronics industry, but it is also used: as a nutritional supplement; in the glass industry; and as a component of pigments in plastics, paints, enamels, inks, and rubber. Selenium can enter the air from burning coal and oil; it can enter the water from rocks and soil, and from agricultural and industrial waste.

Selenium has both beneficial and harmful effects. Low doses of selenium are needed to maintain good health. However, exposure to high levels can cause adverse health effects. Short-term oral exposure to high concentrations of selenium may cause nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Brief exposures to high levels of selenium in air can result in respiratory tract irritation, bronchitis, difficulty breathing, and stomach pains.

Arsenic

Arsenic occurs naturally in low levels in our environment. Some arsenic found in the environment is a result of past mining activities. Arsenic compounds are used to preserve wood; it is also used as a pesticide, primarily on cotton plants.

Ingesting low levels of arsenic can cause nausea and vomiting, decreased production of red and white blood cells, abnormal heart rhythm, damage to blood vessels, and a sensation of “pins and needles” in hands and feet. Ingesting or breathing low levels of arsenic for a long time can cause a darkening of the skin and the appearance of small “corns” or “warts” on the palms, soles, and torso.

Additional information on contaminants can be found at [Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry](#).

How can I reduce the health risks from contaminated fish?

You can reduce the health risks from eating any type of fish by following these tips:

- Do not eat more than the amount of fish recommended by the fish consumption advisories.
- Eat fish from lakes and rivers that do *not* have advisories.
- Eat smaller fish and smaller amounts of fish.
- Eat different types of fish instead of just one type.
- Enjoy fishing by catching then releasing the fish instead of eating them.

Remember: You cannot remove mercury or arsenic by any special cleaning or cooking methods. This is because mercury and arsenic are stored in the meat of the fish and not the in the fat or skin.

How much is one meal of fish?

- One meal for an adult is a half-pound or 8 ounces of fish. This is the weight of the fish BEFORE you cook it. Eight ounces of raw fish is about the size of two decks of playing cards.



- One meal for a child is 4 ounces of fish. Four ounces of raw fish is about the size of one deck of playing cards.

What about fish that I buy instead of catch?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have issued a national mercury advisory for fish that you buy or catch. This includes fresh, frozen, and canned fish that you buy in a store or restaurant. The advisory, issued in March 2004, says that women who are pregnant, may become pregnant, or are nursing, and children under 14 should not eat any king mackerel, shark, swordfish or tilefish. Information on this advisory can be found on [FDA's](#) website or [EPA's](#) website. You can also call FDA, toll-free, at 1-888-SAFEFOOD for more information.

Where can I get more information?

For more information on fish consumption advisories, or to request a copy of the advisories of other material, call Utah Department of Health at 801-538-6191. For more information on fishing and Utah's Rules and Regulations for fishing and boating, visit [Utah Department of Natural Resources](#) and [Utah Department of Environmental Quality](#).

Where are fish advisories in Utah?

Currently there are four fish advisories in Utah. The fish advisories are in the following counties: Summit, Uintah, Washington, and Grand. To see all of the Utah Fish Advisories [click here](#).

Who is my local Health Department?

Utah's Local Health Departments	Local County
Bear River Health Department	Box Elder, Cache, and Rich
Central Utah District Health Department	Juab, Millard, Piute, Sanpete, Sevier, and Wayne
Davis County Health Department	Davis
Salt Lake Valley Health Department	Salt Lake
Southeastern District Health Department	Carbon, Emery, Grand, and San Juan
Southwest District Health Department	Beaver, Garfield, Iron, Kane, and Washington
Summit County Health Department	Summit
Tooele County Health Department	Tooele
TriCounty Health Department	Daggett, Duchesne, and Uintah
Utah County Health Department	Utah
Wasatch County Health Department	Wasatch